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2014

## Some Feelings

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### Repository Citation

Roche, Fr. Randy, "Some Feelings" (2014). *Spiritual Essays*. 336.

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## Some Feelings

If we say, "I don't feel like doing that," we reveal either our firm intention not to act, or that we intend to proceed, although we have a feeling of discomfort. We almost always experience some feelings prior to and subsequent to making a choice about anything that has significance for us. If we pay sufficient attention to our feelings, we will recognize that some are more of a surface variety and others are spiritual indicators that can be relied upon to assist us in making better decisions.

Most of us experience feelings of resistance at times, such as when we are considering, for example, foregoing a favorite TV program so that we can take a friend or family member to a medical appointment. The feeling of disappointment is appropriate, for we will not see the program we had been anticipating. But another feeling, not so readily identifiable, but more effective, leaves us with quiet satisfaction over our decision to help someone rather than to watch TV. We let the negative feeling inform us of the cost, but are guided in our decision by the greater significance to us of a personally held value, such as a human relationship

When we are actively deciding upon a course of action to take or to avoid, we are likely to consider advantages and disadvantages, probable consequences and also how the issue relates with our beliefs and ideals. A person who is very concerned about how someone else might respond to an invitation will have to choose whether or not to take the risk of asking. In making such a decision, fear might be one factor, but the desire for honest communication is another. If the fear is understood as not being about actual harm or wrongdoing, that feeling is acknowledged but it is not determinative, while the deeper desire for human relationship is. Another person might have no concern at all about another's reaction to an invitation because a high degree of mutual trust already exists. Sometimes all our feelings seem to come together in affirmation that what we have in mind is quite right for us.

We do not always give careful prior consideration to every word we speak or every action we take. After we have spoken or acted or refrained from speaking or acting, and have observed the consequences, we might then experience feelings that affirm or call into question the decision we made. Rather than opening ourselves to a futile movement of regret, we can make a careful assessment that will enable us to learn from specific incidences some of the real effects of decisions upon us and those around us.

If someone went to a movie or other form of entertainment with no thought other than to enjoy a bit of recreation, but was greatly disturbed by the

content of it, he or she might fall into a pattern of purely negative thoughts and accompanying feelings or choose to reflect on the experience in two helpful ways. One positive option entails seeking healing for the interior disturbance by facing it prayerfully, thereby growing in appropriate self-knowledge. The second option involves reflecting on the advantages of, for example, gathering a bit of information about the form of entertainment ahead of time, which might lead to an informed conscious decision rather than being unpleasantly surprised.

Only a moment is required to attend to the feelings we experience in relation to our thoughts: an ordinary spiritual activity in which God's inspirations are found.